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TO : Department of State

741r.022/1-1551

FROM : BUENOS AIRES, No. 998, JANUARY 15, 1951.

REF :

SUBJECT : FALKLAND ISLANDS' CONTROVERSY AGAIN IN PRESS.

1/ The controversy over the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands has flared up again in the local press, the occasion being the publication of the annual report of the British Colonial Office for 1949. Almost all papers - including La Prensa - have published articles about it, upholding Argentina's rights which, they claim, will ultimately prevail. A sample article is that in Democracia, a translation of which is attached.

One paper - Critica - sent a reporter over to Montevideo to interview the new Governor, Sir Geoffrey CLIFFORD, who was en route to his post. Its article, under the heading "Colonies? Never! The Malvinas Are Ours!", carried with it a not-too-flattering photograph of him and engaged in light satire at his expense. Noting that Sir Geoffrey wore a monocle, the article commented that he was accustomed to looking at reality through one eye only, and that he therefore saw the truth only partially, distorted as it was by the lack of vision which he could have if he used both eyes.

The flare-up is one which occurs every so often and is not likely to have any serious repercussions. However, it will not do much in the way of smoothing current Anglo-Argentine relations, which have been considerably ruffled for some months, primarily because of the meat negotiations.

Nothing has appeared in the press regarding the minor but positive role which the U.S. Navy played in the Falklands, or our failure to invoke the Monroe Doctrine at the time the British occupied them. This is probably just as well.


John C. Pool
First Secretary of Embassy

Enclosure:

1/ Translation of article
from Democracia dated
January 11, 1951.

Copy to River Plate Affairs
JCPool:el

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Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch
No. 998 dated January 15, 1951
from Buenos Aires, Argentina.

TRANSLATION

Democracia

January 11, 1951.

ALL PREPONDERANCE WILL SUCCUMB

While their Empire is disintegrating, the British - perhaps for that very reason - lose no opportunity to explain with childish talk the hundred-year old spoliation of the Falklands. To all the arguments used to mislead the world and perhaps to delude even themselves, there is now added the report of the Colonial Office the preface of which abounds gratuitously in references and data summarizing the political history of our islands. The enormous heap of paper devoted to the archipelago constitutes an immense jumble with which a tower higher than that of Babel might be erected, and yet the plunder in question would lose none of the characteristics which make of it an incomparable model of cynicism and contempt of law.

We will not say over again that it was not John Davis but Magellan's men who first discovered the Falklands; neither is it necessary for us to recall the succession of subsequent events that confirm our right to sovereign possession of the territory. Well informed honest historians have fully and clearly recorded these events which are also duly recorded in the protests which have been addressed in vain to the proper authorities. The British continue to think it easier to ignore both the work of historians and the fairness of our claims. With abuse of force they carried out their plunder and with abuse of force they maintain it as a fait accompli. The irritating case of the wolf and the lamb is repeated here, thus mocking all the ideals and all the principles for which war was entered into and for which so many brave Englishmen died.

Aside from this, the question of the Falklands continues to be a sample of a double criterion which is disconcerting and vexing. How is it possible - the most ignorant might well ask - for Great Britain to send troops against the violent invasion of a remote eastern peninsula, when she herself maintains her invasion of the territory of a country which she calls a friend? Why should what is looked upon as wrong in Korea be right, in the eyes of the British, in Argentina? Or is it that egoism and pride are still placed above law and justice? It is not for us to abstain from contributing to the defence of international law merely because we do not yet fully enjoy its benefits, but it needs be said that the injuries that Great Britain tries to remedy elsewhere in the world have been inflicted by

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herself in our territory.

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It is now more than a century ago that the crew of the "Clio" struck the colors of Belgrano's flag in the Falklands. This attack left our country comparatively unmoved. Since then there has flown over that unredeemed land a foreign flag covering the booty of the most fabulous piracy known in history. All this has not caused us to lose any of our faith in the final triumph of justice. We know that all preponderance is bound to succumb and that no one fights and dies in vain in wars waged against oppression. To doubt this would be to doubt also all that makes living together possible and tolerable.

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